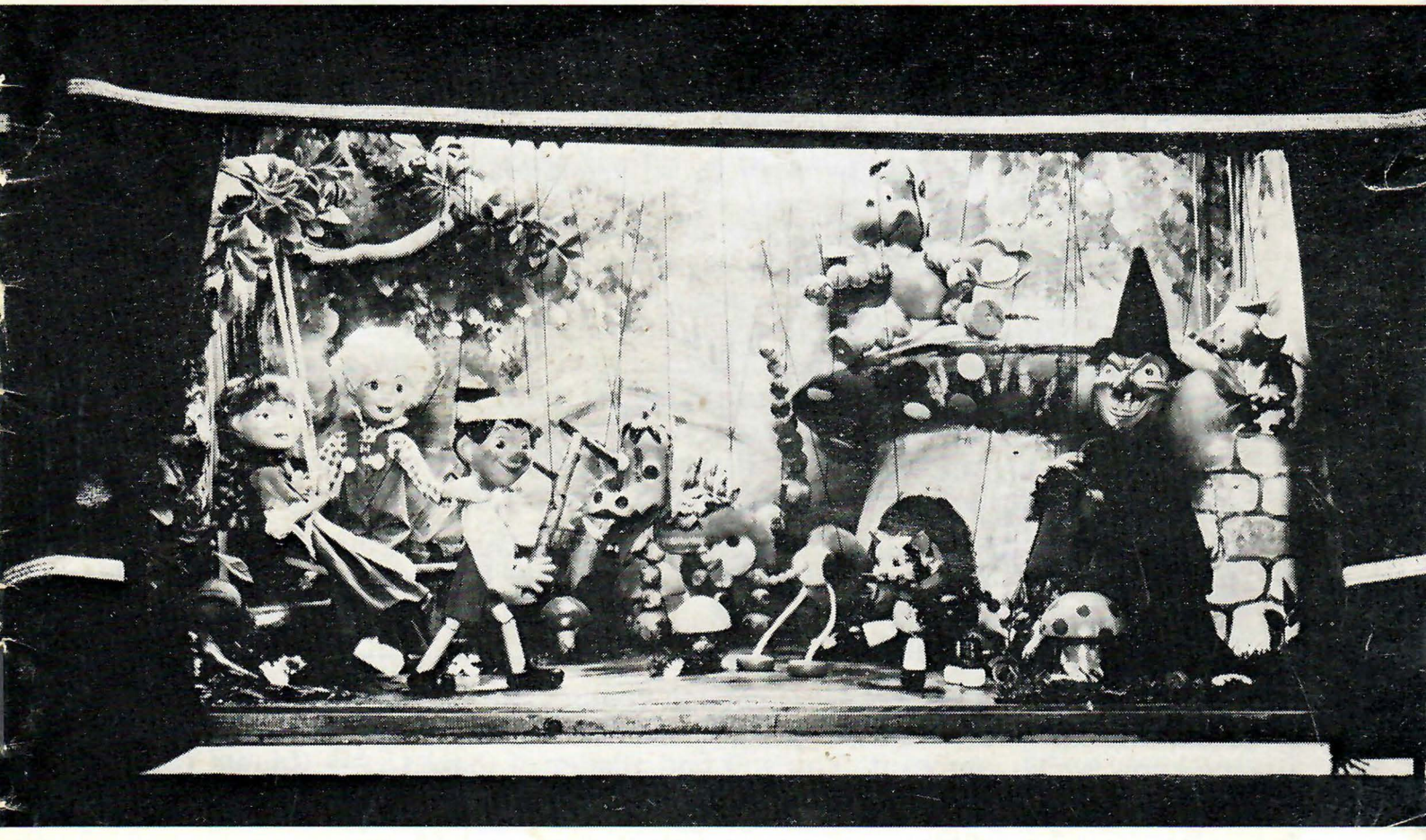
PELPUP NEWS

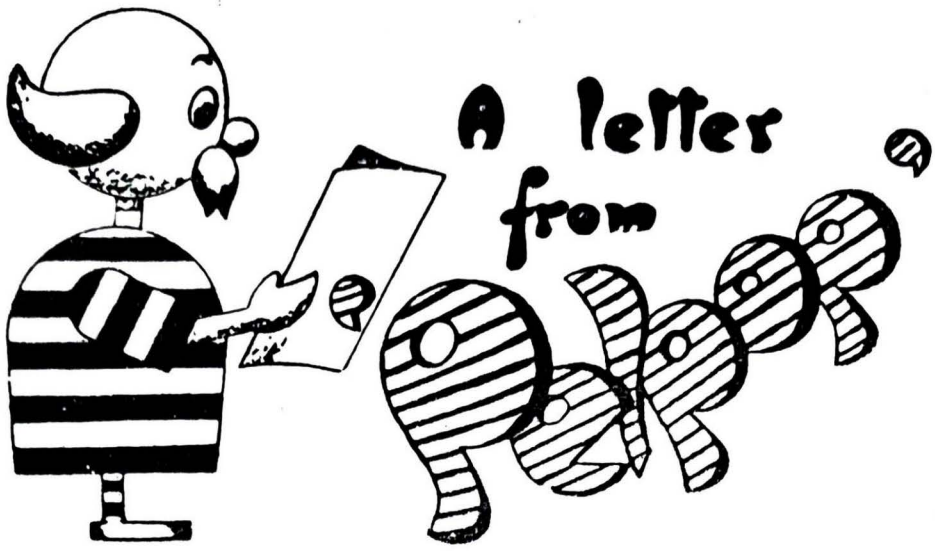
SUMMER EDITION 1974 Number 27



Produced by PELPOP

Pelham PUPPETS

Marlborough, Wiltshire



The
Pelpup Club

PELHAM PUPPETS
MARLBOROUGH
Wiltshire
Telephone - 442

MARLBOROUGH,
September, 1974

Dear Pelpups,

This is a troubled year, we live from day to day wondering what item of supply is going to become scarce or totally unobtainable, not to mention its price going sky high. Plastic parts were the first to become difficult to obtain but so far our vent heads are still coming in by buying the raw materials from abroad. These have already been exported from this country. Isn't it a crazy world? I always said that as long as we get our precious screw eyes our puppets will hold together!

Our biggest new market this year is Australia. We have recently sent them seven animated units. We had to pay special attention to tying the puppets down before crating the units in case they travel upside down. That is not a pun about going down under, but a serious problem with our units travelling any distance. Actually it is incorrect to say, in our country anyway, I saw a puppet hanging up in a shop because in fact it is hanging down! That was a pun.

I would like to say a special thank you to all those kind members who have responded to my appeal for used stamps for Christchurch Priory. Our total collection has come to 20,000 stamps and here are the seven best collections:

Laura Reed, Indiana, with	2,425	Gavin Guss, Washington	1,068
Paul Lockwood, Washington	1,750	Marissa Poi, Indiana	1,000
Tom Stevens, California	1,409	Kaven Langford, Rhodesia	865
Elizabeth Cuddy, Ireland	1,365		

I do not think a puppet kit is enough compensation for your fine efforts so I am offering you each a puppet of your choice (excluding vents). Please let me know which you want. You will find a letter of thanks from Canon Yorke with some interesting facts about the Priory Church.

Winners of the Play Writing Competition are as follows:
Camilla Shelley for 'The Search for the Golden Lute' & the author of 'The Ox and the Ass'.

Winners of the Cartoon Competition are as follows: Helen Tomlinson, Robert King, Ila Burdette, Ga., USA, Graham Crooks.

Winners of the Photograph Competition are as follows: Mike Fuller, David Hughes, Gottfried Pelmidt, Germany, Mark Chester.

Would prize-winners write and tell me which puppet they have chosen.

In order that I can get to know you better I would like you to send me a snapshot of you and your puppets. It's a new competition, I will show two in the Christmas issue. I am showing two typical pictures this time to give you an idea; remember you are the main feature, so let's have a film-star smile! Also it gives me the opportunity to show you the Boy and Girl Vent Puppets with legs, held by Andrew MacKichan and Anna Cox. The legs are a great improvement and they increase the scope of activity tremendously.

Thank you, John Burrows of USA, his picture is another example of the above type of photograph, for your interesting account of your puppet activities.

I do not expect many of you will remember Keith Anderson of South Africa when he was a Pelpup. He now designs costumes and trains trapeze artists, and has returned to puppetry. Thank you for your interesting article and picture.

I am in search of the following old magazines: Nos. 2, 6, 9, 14, 16. Do you know any old Pelpups who might have back nos. to spare? I will give a puppet for each of these magazines.

There are two new L.P. records out by Pickwicks. Songs and rhymes by Wally Whyton and a lively selection of pop songs and dances. They will be spotted easily by Pelpups because one has a large and beautiful picture of Bimbo on the cover and the other has Fritzi and Mitzi. The first could be very useful for your shows; carefully select the items that suit your puppets and record them on tape (if you are lucky enough to have one), or you could use the record in its entirety, using one main puppet to mime the songs and slipping in the appropriate scenery and puppets as each song changes. It might be better to use cutout figures for the characters in each turn because the songs are so quick you would have a job to keep up with the action. If you really practised your routine and could manage it, you would have a slick, fast-moving show, which is terribly important. Nothing is worse than long speeches, slow action and too much time spent in changing scenes. If nothing else, this record would be excellent practise, and provide you with some individual turns. At the same time if you did manage to cope with the whole record you would have a first class ready-made show on one record.

Good luck,

Pelpop

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

PLEASE SEND MY NEXT MAGAZINE I ENCLOSE P.O. FOR

15p

for 1 year's subscription

Date .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

.....

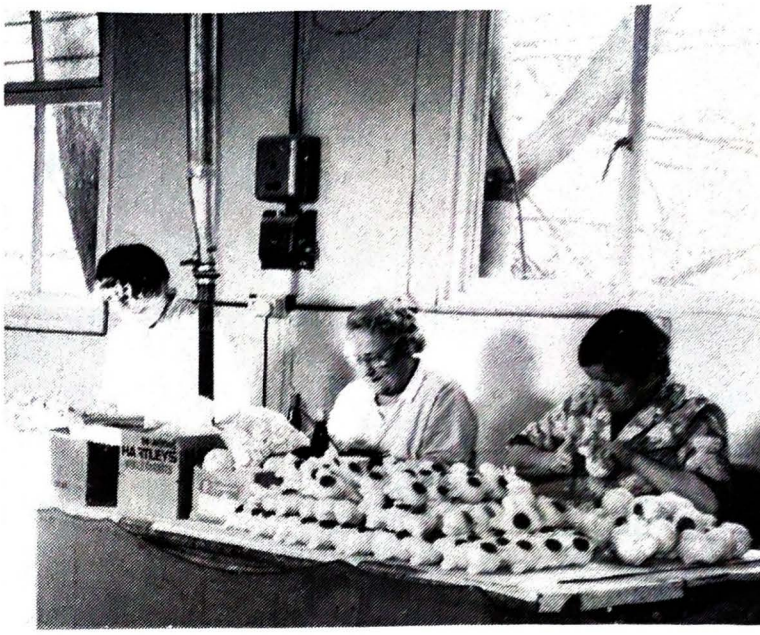
A walk around the factory

by FRANK LAWTON

Cleaning the Mouldings

In the last *Pelpup News*, we saw how moulded heads and other shapes are made. This picture shows three of our ladies preparing the "casts", as they are called, for painting.

First, any small holes have to be filled, and unwanted seams (where the two halves of the mould joined) filed off. Then the head is sand-papered, to give a smooth surface for the paint which will be put on later in the Dipping Room. We sometimes call this the Artistic Restoration Department!



Secondly, two small holes must be drilled, and screw-eyes inserted, usually just above the ears, where the black strings will later be attached. A hole ¼″ in diameter is then drilled in the neck, and a wooden plug inserted, and glued into place. After the glue has set, a screw-hook is put into the neck, and the head is ready for the Dipping Room.

The Dipping Room

All the basic painting is done in this room, which has a long table down the middle, with sets of wires above, which you can see in the picture.

The head is dipped in the large pot of paint, and hung up so as to drip on the tray beneath, which can later be emptied back into the paint-pot. Alice can be seen taking the last drips off a batch of Goofy heads with a paint-brush.

For the benefit of new members, the subscription of 15p entitles you to a badge and a year's subscription to the magazine—i.e., two magazines, one on joining, that is the current copy, and the next issue. They come out in Aug./Sept. and December. If you do not renew you are still a member but you will not receive a magazine.

If on receiving this magazine it is your second copy and you want to continue receiving magazines please renew your subscription on this form as soon as possible.

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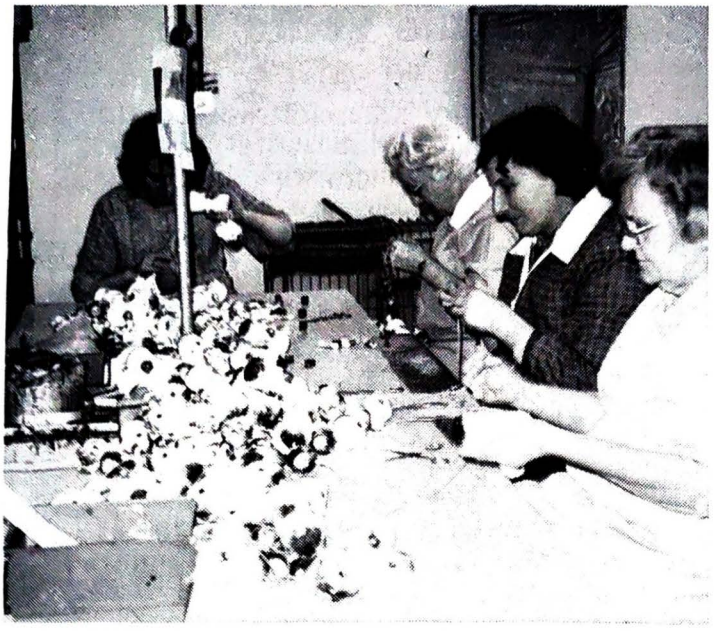


Nearly all heads receive one coat of semi-gloss paint, which gives a good surface for painting the features later, and this special paint dries in about three hours. We try, however, to let it dry for at least twelve hours, and usually the heads are left on the racks overnight, and collected each morning. Several thousands of heads and bodies go through this department each week.

The paint is, of course, completely safe and non-toxic.

Animal Assembly

This is a different process from the body assembly we described in the last issue of *Pelpup News*, and has its own separate department.

One difference which you can clearly see in the picture is that the parts have all been painted by the time they get to the assembly table. The important difference is, however, that animals are jointed together with a special string instead of hooks and eyes.

This special string is very strong and heavily waxed. It is interesting that it is identical with the string used for the release mechanism of certain types of parachute. For our purposes, the wax is very useful in "lubricating" the joints of the animals, and this prevents wear.

On the left of the picture is a pot of glue, which is used for sticking-on such things as the horse's mane and poodle's fur.

About a thousand animals a week are assembled here, and don't forget that there are eight leg-pieces, four feet and a neck, apart from head and body, in each animal.

The Clothes—First Stage

The first thing to do when you are going to make clothes is to cut out the material. Something like five thousand sets of clothing are produced each week for this factory, and you can see that this has to be mechanised to some extent, otherwise someone would get very tired using a pair of scissors!

The photograph shows Megan operating a Press, which speeds up this process of cutting-out. On the wall at the back of the photograph you can see just some of the cutting knives we use. The idea is that you select your knife (say, for a blouse sleeve), and then fold the material you are using so as to get up to 16 thicknesses under the knife. This material is placed on the base-plate of the machine, and the white top-plate is swung into position on top. Then the two buttons (one on each black handle) are pressed, and down comes the top-plate on the cutter, which slices through the material underneath, thus producing 16 blouse sleeves in a very short time.

Owing to the high cost of postage I answer only letters that require an answer.

I do not acknowledge plays, photographs, requests for pen friends etc., etc.

Letter from the Revd. Canon Leslie Yorke

Dear Pelpups,

We have an organisation called "The Friends of the Priory Church" working to raise funds for the preservation and maintenance of this ancient and beautiful Church. One of the fund raising activities of The Friends deals with postage stamps which are given to the Priory. These stamps are sorted, graded and sold to the best advantage.

It so happens that "The Friend" who deals with the stamps is a friend of Pelpop, and Pelpop and his daughter Sarah started to collect stamps for the Priory. Then, as you know, Pelpop asked all Pelpups to help in this good work and organised a competition in this connection. Your response has been most encouraging and it will greatly increase the amount the Priory Church receives from the proceeds of the sale of stamps.

So may I express my sincere thanks to Pelpop, Sarah and to all Pelpups for the help that is being given to the Priory Church—help that is coming from all over the world.

Let me now tell you a little about the Priory Church.

Christchurch is situated in the County of Dorset on the South West coast of England. Until recently it was in Hampshire but the county boundaries have been altered.

Building of the Church was commenced by Ralph Flambard—later Bishop of Durham—in the year 1094, on the site of an earlier Saxon monastery. The Nave, built in the Norman style of architecture, was completed by 1150 and the Church then became a Priory of Augustinian or Black Canons. Then followed the building of the Great Quire and Lady Chapel in Early English and Perpendicular style—the whole being completed by 1400.

At the dissolution of the Monasteries under King Henry VIII the priory was suppressed and in 1539 the conventual buildings where the monks lived and worked were destroyed, but the Church was given to the town of Christchurch as a Parish Church—still retaining its original form of three churches in one—Nave, Quire and Lady Chapel, and so it remains to this day.

There is a very interesting story called "The Legend of the Miraculous Beam" connected with the building of the Church which, as mentioned, was commenced in the year 1094.

At that time this area was named Twynham. The legend tells how the builders originally laid the foundations for the Church on St. Catherine's Hill, about a mile north of Twynham and in the valley down which the River Avon flows to the sea.

All the materials taken up the hill during the day by the workmen were by some mysterious means continuously transported down the hill at night to the site of the former Saxon monastery at Twynham and the builders took this to be Divine Guidance that the Church should be built there. So, work was commenced. Among the workmen was one who laboured well but never appeared at mealtimes neither did he draw any pay.

When the roof was nearing completion it was discovered that one of the main wooden beams had been cut too short. The workmen left it on the ground overnight whilst they considered what should be done about it but when they returned to their work the next morning they were astounded to find that during the night not only had the beam been raised to its right position but that it had also been mysteriously lengthened.

The mysterious workman was not seen again. It was agreed that he must have been "The Carpenter of Nazareth". Such was the effect of this that the Church became known as "Christ's Church" and the name of the township changed from Twynham to Christchurch. The Church was originally dedicated "The Holy Trinity Church" and that is still its correct title but ever since the legend originated it has been known throughout the world as "Christchurch Priory" or "Christchurch Priory Church".

In later years part of the roof collapsed and the Miraculous Beam was then placed on the floor behind an altar. Its fame or history was by then well known and unscrupulous people came into the Church to chip or hack off parts of the Beam, which they then sold as cures for various ailments.

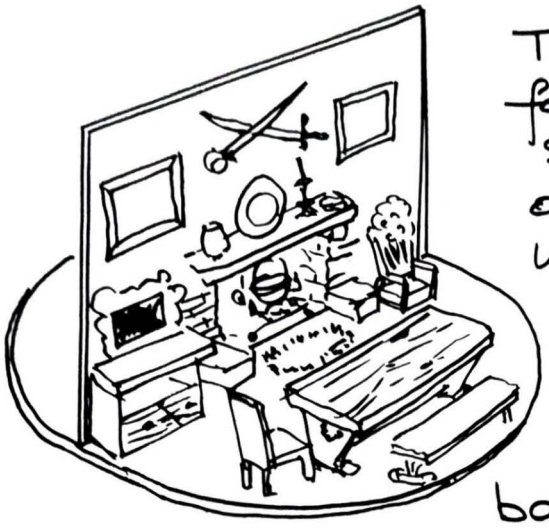
Quite a lot of the "Miraculous Beam" disappeared in this way so to save it from complete destruction it was placed high up in an archway out of harm's way. It is still there.

I would like to tell you more of the beauty and historic interest of the Priory Church so perhaps I may have an opportunity for doing this sometime in the future.

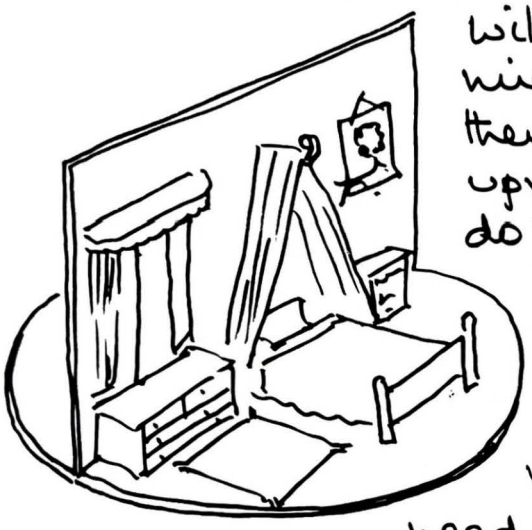
Greetings and best wishes, and when you are in this part of the world come and see us.

LESLIE H. YORKE.

A REVOLVING STAGE



This is a very good idea for a quick change of scenery. It is of course only suitable for those who have permanent stages set up & where you have ample space for storing such scenes. Where the back board & base are fixed at right angles their storage is very bulky, but with a little ingenuity you might think of a way to hinge them, or disconnect the upright from the base. If you do the latter, you will need to fix the furniture that is against the back wall to the floor, so it acts as a support to the wall.



You will find that you will need to keep the height of the centre board below your back rail & the width no more than your two uprights in order to be able to turn the scene about when in position.

Of course you must choose two scenes that you are most likely to use again & again. Quite a useful one would be indoors & out of doors. For the garden scene you could use a lot of plastic flowers & foliage, & artificial grass.

A TIGHT ROPE WALKE

This makes a very good turn for your Christmas shows. Any puppet (Type SS, SL, SM) can very easily be made to walk the tight rope with just a small adjustment to the feet.

All you require to do is either to groove his feet so, → make the groove deeper infront, or you can just glue some match sticks under the feet, two together on each side leaving a gap in the middle. (used ones!) Fix a taut string or wire across the stage. Follow the antics.

GAP

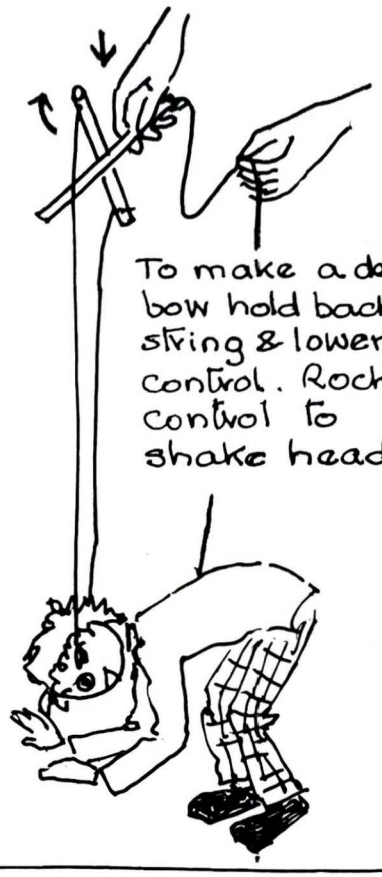
Make some steps for him to climb up (matchboxes glued together, are useful.)

PUPPET EXERCISES

Take the left leg string together with the right hand string & raise to lift left leg & right hand of puppet.

NOW PULL RIGHT DOWN TO RAISE OPPOSITE LEG & ARM

BOUNCE ON EACH LEG TO DANCE.



To make a deep bow hold back string & lower control. Rock control to shake head.

NOW LIFT FRONT OF CONTROL TO RAISE HANDS.

Tilt control down towards leg coming up.

YOU CAN ADD A TUMMY STRING TO MAKE HIM LEAN BACK.

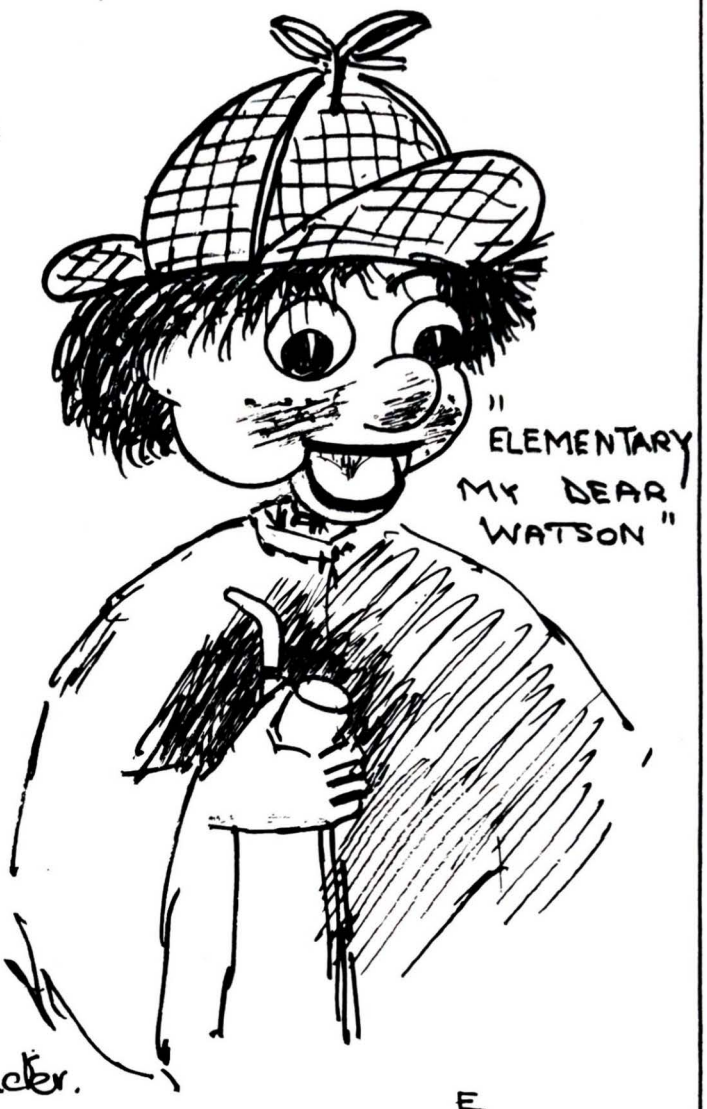
OR MAKE IT A 'RUN TARO' WITH BACK STRING.

A puppet likes to climb up things so lift a leg string & tilt control down him lean & push up with his arms.

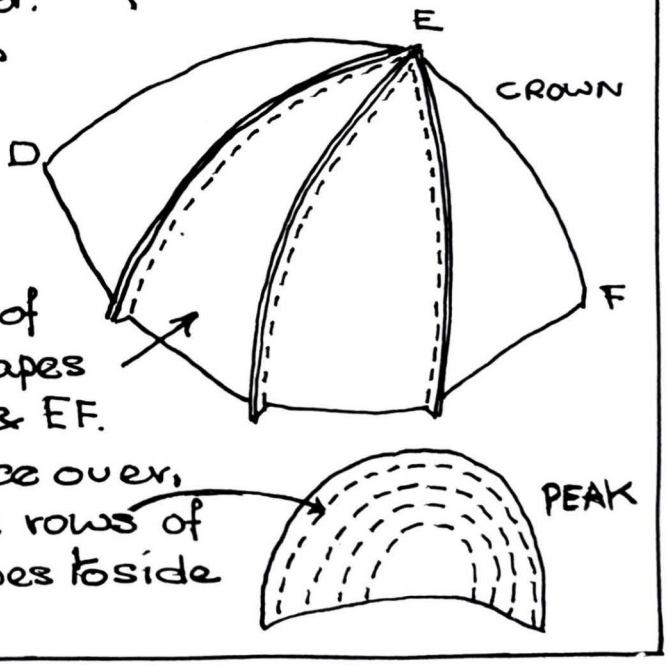
To make forward himself

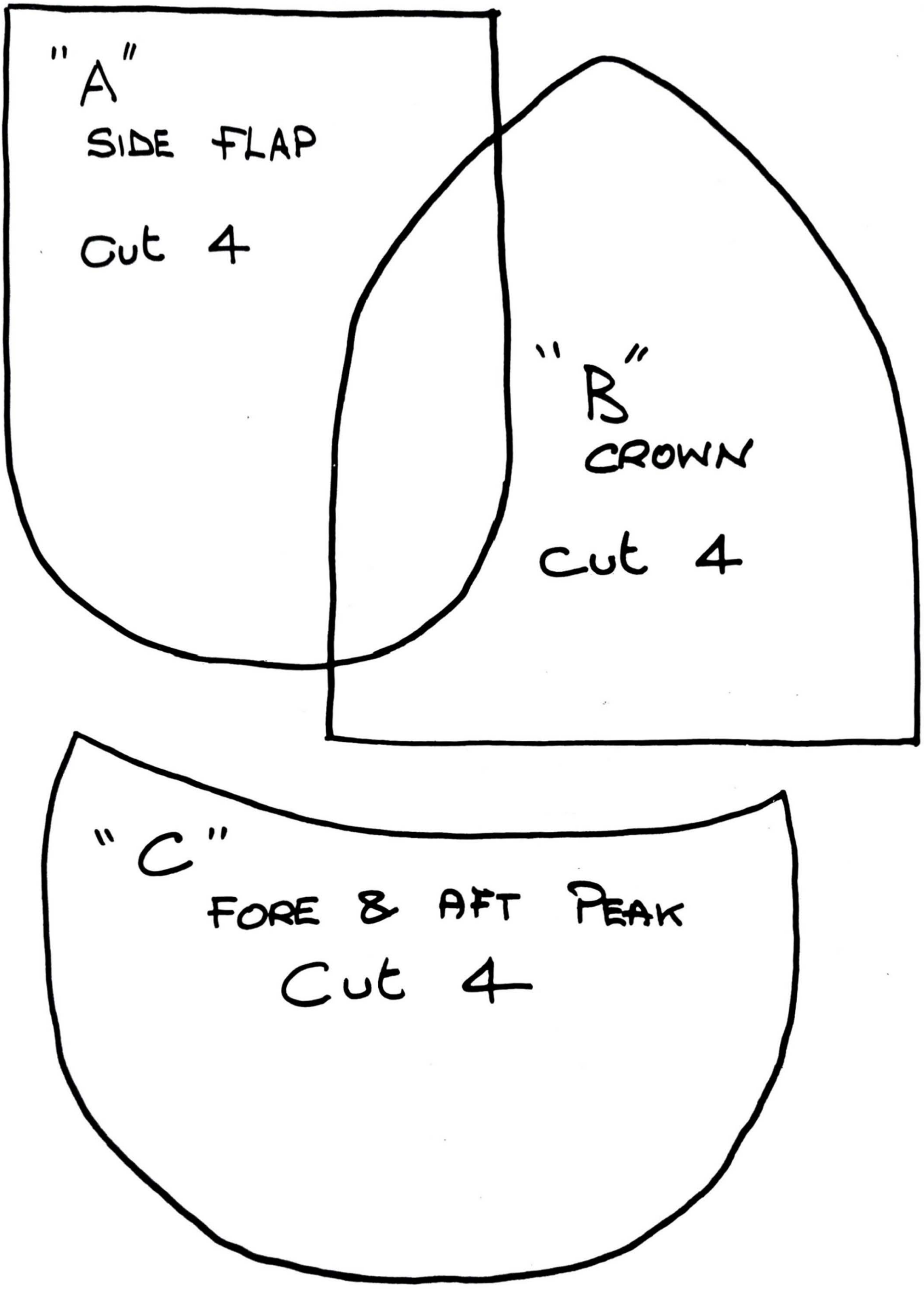
How To Make A Deer Stalker Hat For Supy

Ventriloquial puppets like dressing up. There are no strings to worry about & it is easy to add hats & capes, even while the puppet is performing. You could do a Mike Yarwood act, or should I say, Try to! Put a pair of thick horn rimmed spectacles on Supy & who have you got!? Moustaches & beards can be attached to an adhesive backing & added easily & quickly. A whole new wig makes a complete transformation of the character.

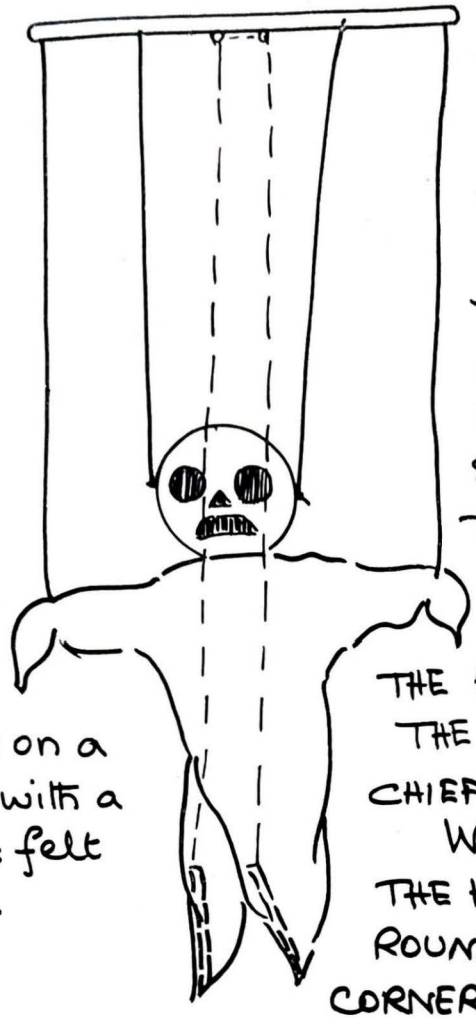


Select a nice piece of tartan or bright check material, a thick woollen piece is best. You will require about 1/4 sq. yd or to be more exact a piece 18" x 14". Cut out four of each pattern. Join the four B-shapes together & close by joining ED & EF. Join together two A's & two C's twice over, turn right way out & machine rows of stitches. Join to crown, attach tapes to side flaps & tie on top of hat.




"A"
SIDE FLAP
Cut 4
"B"
CROWN
Cut 4
"C"
FORE & AFT PEAK
Cut 4

GHOSTS



Mark on a face with a black felt pen.

HERE IS A VERY SIMPLE PUPPET TO MAKE & A VERY USEFUL ONE TO HAVE AROUND. THE HEAD CAN BE MADE FROM A ROUND WOODEN BALL, AN OLD TENNIS BALL OR AN ELECTRIC LIGHT BULB, IN WHICH CASE IT WOULD BE WISE TO WRAP THE BULB WITH STICKY TAPE, COMPLETELY COVERING THE GLASS. INSULATING TAPE THAT STRETCHES IS THE BEST TO USE. IT WOULD CONTAIN THE GLASS SHOULD THE BULB GET BROKEN.

THE BODY IS MERELY A WHITE HANDKERCHIEF, A LARGE ONE WITH A GOOD HEM. WRAP THE HANDKERCHIEF OVER THE HEAD, TIE WITH WHITE THREAD ROUND NECK, WHILE PULLING TWO OPPOSITE CORNERS DOWN EQUALLY, TO FORM LEGS.

ATTACH TWO STRINGS, STITCHING THROUGH HANDKERCHIEF & TIE TO A 6" WOODEN BAR, ABOUT 2" FROM EACH END. STRINGS FROM EACH END OF THE BAR ARE TIED TO THE "HANDS".

IF YOU WANT TO PUT STRINGS TO THE LEGS, INSERT A SHORT MECCANO ROD IN THE SEAM OF EACH LEG, TO ADD A LITTLE WEIGHT. EITHER ONE OR TWO SCREWEYES IN THE CENTRE OF THE ROD ARE PUT IN FOR THE LEG STRING TO "RUN THROUGH". I THINK FOUR STRINGS ARE SUFFICIENT BECAUSE BY ROCKING THE BAR YOU GET JUST THE RIGHT SORT OF ACTION FOR A GHOST & YOU BOB HIM ALONG AT THE SAME TIME.

Letter from John Burrows

Since I was seven, I have had puppets (the first one a Pelham "Baby Bear"). Now, ten years later, I have 80 marionettes, including about 70 Pelham Puppets.

I started doing shows in a large theater my father built for me in our basement, but as this wasn't the best place to give shows, and because of the demand to give shows away from the house, we built a slightly better stage that can come apart for travelling. The theater totally is 6 feet high, 9 feet wide, and about 4 feet deep, with the stage opening 2 feet high, 5 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. The stage floor is 2½ feet above ground, and it has burlap draw curtains, footlights, a side spotlight, and many hooks on the sides for puppets. The stage comes apart into six sections which average 4 feet by 6 feet, and which are made from sheets of plywood reinforced with 1 by 2's. It is assembled with door hinges and nuts and bolts in five to ten minutes. My shows are all on tape, and are mostly recorded from children's records. (I make that clear to prospective employers before accepting jobs.) My main shows are **Hansel and Gretel** from the Humperdink opera (a 78 recording from 1946 with Basil Rathbone and Jane Powell), **Peter and the Wolf** with full orchestration, and **Rapunzal, Jack and the Beanstalk,** and **Rumplestiltskin** from "Let's Pretend" records. The shows are from 20 to 40 minutes' long, and to cut time we have the shows worked out so that there are almost no scene changes. Most sets are simple, a burlap backdrop for inside (gold to match the curtains) and chairs and tables, and for outside scenes, a blue shag rug for the backdrop and the necessary equipment for the act. When changing scenes, we usually do it without closing the curtains, by having the puppets walk in place, and having the old set slide off the stage on one side, and the new set slide on from the other side, as if the puppets were actually making the journey. This keeps the audience's attention better than closed curtain changes. I try to use simple sets and simple colors because they harmonize with the Pelham Puppets. I don't usually use painted backdrops because a plain backdrop stimulates a child's imagination to fill in the picture, and it therefore involves him more in the show.

I do shows at our Public Library, at schools, and church Mother-Daughter Banquets mostly. The farthest that I have travelled for a show is about 80 miles, but I usually stay within 20 to 30 miles. At schools and churches I get from $15.00 to $20.00 (£6–£8). I do quite a few shows for our school French Club, and I average many more free or charity shows than paying ones. I now use only one other helper for the shows, usually either Toby Lehman, Damon Smith, or Steve Siebenaller.

Our main work this summer will be our job at the Janesville Shopping Hall. We will be performing three shows a day for five Saturdays from July 20 to August 17, and will be paid $40.00 (£16.00) for each day's work.

Unfortunatey, as I will be entering Grinnell College (about 350 miles from Whitewater) and I will have a busy study schedule, I will be setting the puppets aside for four years, unless something comes up and I am able to continue with puppets there. After college, I

hope to continue my involvement, possibly incorporated into art teaching, and hopefully with more professional equipment and better skill.

Some of the puppets that I have made are ghosts from a square piece of sheet, with wadded newspaper for the head and a string to gather the neck. These are effective when you have five or ten on stage at once so the whole stage is filled. They can all be worked on a master control. I obtain hair for puppets from a beauty parlor which gives me any long hair that they cut. I also have a grouping of angels: cones of paper with paper wings and gold glitter with styrofoam heads and gold pipe-cleaner halos. These are arranged on gold-colored furnace filters. (Used filters can be washed, and cost nothing.) Also good are seven SS puppets strung on a master control to do the can-can, move hands, and bow in unison. This is worked by one person, but only for a short time as it is heavy. 5 or 6 SM puppets can be hung on one control with a stick slid between the strings so that, when pulled, they will all sing at once. A huge giant puppet can easily be created by attaching poles into old boots, and then attaching an old pair of jeans to the poles, and stuffing them. These give the impression of a giant that could really eat a normal sized puppet. The operator's hand can be used when the giant picks up things.

As I have found puppetry a perfect form of entertaining from operettas before 100 people to a Vent at a party with a few friends, I hope to be able to continue to develop my work.

Shalom,

JOHN BURROWS,

(Felix from Whitewater, USA).

PELPUPS WRITE

CHRIS WOODLEY (age 10).—I am writing to you to tell you about the Langley Green Junior School puppet group which consists of 11 puppets and 6 people. We have done 4 plays so far. The reason for this is that we only started on January 22nd this year.

THE REV. ED CORBIN, St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.—My wife and I are in the ministry and work exclusively with children. Therefore, we are extremely impressed and excited with your beautiful marionettes. We are very interested in purchasing some more figures. We presently have the four, with the movable mouths.

GILLIAN WILKINSON.—One thing I find very useful are the inner tubes of the paper rolls used on an adding machine in offices. They are usually plastic but are sometimes thick cardboard. These rolls make good legs and arms and are about 3 ins. long but can be longer. I thought these might come in handy for other puppeteers.

JON MARTZ.—I went back again to the Puppet Festival yesterday (in spite of less than a quarter tank of gas in my car) to see Tony Urbano and to get you this program. Since I had to rob the laundry money to find enough for the show ticket, I was disturbed to learn that they wanted ten cents for the program; however a search of the pockets in my jeans and jacket produced 8 pennies which I offered to the "storekeeper", meanwhile clutching the booklet so tightly that I smudged the ink on the cover, as you can see.

Although Pasadena has its spanking new Convention Center, I'm delighted to say the Puppet Festival came back to the Huntington Sheraton Hotel as in former years. The picturesque rambling hotel is an ideal spot, and the sunny open patio surrounded by exhibit rooms and theater allows outdoor as well as indoor showings.

As I wandered through the tiny "store" among brass Punch doorknockers (fitting subject for a doorknocker), do-it-yourself pamphlets, finger puppets, etc., the huge volume called, I think, The Dwiggins Theater, caught my eye. Much too expensive for me to buy, but a wondrous book.

Sunday afternoon's program, Carnival of the Animals, created by a college puppet group, was creative and witty. Some of the animals were hand puppets, some marionettes, some were—is there such a thing as a body puppet? The turtle operator, for example, was exposed when someone snatched off her shell. Each animal was introduced by some very clever rhyme and accompanied by appropriate classical recordings, chosen with much care. A dinosaur almost stole the show; he was a disjointed kind of creature; like the other prehistoric animals he was made from unaltered pieces of styrofoam packaging carried separately by a line of six or seven students.

Then came the event that apparently had been the cause of the large audience and the fact that the hotel parking lot had been filled as well as the adjoining streets. Tony Urbano.

It was delightful to get behind the scenes of his popular television show, Dusty's Tree-house. His creations projected their personalities whimsically, endearingly; surely they have lives of their own. I peered up at Tony's mouth, not willing to believe that he was putting words in their mouths. But he was at the very least, I discovered, giving them a helping lip. Although they didn't seem to need his help at all.

Tony also demonstrated his mastery of strings with his piano player marionette, who gave his usual virtuoso performance to the delight of all of us.

Any trip to the Huntington Sheraton ends as pleasantly as it begins with a drive through tree-shaded streets lined with mansions. Even back here in our own world of cottages and "gas-siphoners" the aura of make-believe lingers on for days.

GRAHAM CROOKS.—This is the show we did: First we did "Angel Face" by the Glitter Band. For this we used 3 specials, Hansel, and Guitarist. Second we did "Mommy Gimme A Drinka Water" by Danny Kaye (Capitol 15061). This is very good when used with the boy and a single spotlight shining down from above. This is one of our audiences' favourites. Thirdly we did "My Dingaling" with our guitar man 'Buck Cherry' and the 3 specials. Then we did a little act leading up to the "Ying Tong Song". All of this went with great success. And we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Then we did an encore by special request. For this we did your play called "The Weatherman". I haven't got the book with that play in it, so I wrote down what I could remember from reading it a long time ago. After this my Dad and I adapted it to a song by 'Flanders and Swan' called "A Song for Weather". This we didn't have to talk for either since it was pre-recorded for my sister's party. Everyone thought it was very funny! For a joke we passed round a hat with a note in it. This read: "Donations kindly accepted. 11 puppets to support." For all this we got 25p each to go towards new puppets, etc. Oh! I forgot to mention it; our group is called the "2 Gi's". We usually get 10p for a performance. We both have fun doing the shows because we don't do very many. I live in Hillingdon and Gerald lives in Flackwell Heath. In my opinion you have to enjoy the work behind the scenes, making scenery, preparing the theatre, etc., as well as doing the show. My theatre is your lightweight theatre and to this I have added lights (we have three grades—white, warm, and spooky). Also I have made a stage floor with wings and backdrops, etc.

DAVID RICHARD HANSEN, P.O. Box 191, Selebi-Pikwe, Botswana.—The main reason I am writing to you is to inform you of a very useful address I have obtained and I feel other Pelpups may find it of some use. The address is that of French's Theatre Bookshop. They have a very large range of pantomimes and other children's plays. Although the plays are written for humans I have found it has not been that hard to adapt them for puppets. The address is: French's Theatre Bookshop, 26 Southampton Street, London, W.C.2.

Samuel French Ltd. has also got branches in the U.S.A., Canada, South America, New Zealand, India, Malta, Australia, Africa, and many other branches in the U.K.

JACKIE HUNT.—In January, 8 of us did a puppet show for charity. We used 9 marionette puppets and 1 ventriloquist puppet. The show raised £17.25 altogether and we sent it to Cancer Research. We also had a sale of sweets and biscuits which we made ourselves. The show was called 'Who Dunnit?'.

MIKE FULLER, California, U.S.A.—Riley McRae, David Hughes (two friends of mine) and I have a puppet club called The Palace Marionettes. We started this club around last August and so far we've given two main shows. Our first show was at a Renaissance faire at my church. The faire was three days long (1st, 2nd and 3rd November) and we gave 8 shows in all. Each show varied, but mainly the shows consisted of the song "Duelling Banjos", the song "Life gits tee-jus, don't it?" (RCA Victor) and the play "Magic in Gallows Wood" by Stephen Rattenbury from *Pelpup News* No. 24, and some fortune telling done by the wizard (who came in on a flying carpet). All of these shows went over really well and we got a lot of compliments. Also we were paid $14.00 in donations. Our second show was at the Cabrillo Racket Club. It went fairly smoothly (we had pretty much the same show as before) until one little boy got too close and purposely hit the wizard (who scolded him and got him quieted down). We were paid $15.00 (more than we expected).

I. M. MCWALTER.—At the moment I am planning a new show. It is going to be called 'Alice in Fantasy-Land'. Alice is your Dutch girl, but without the head-dress. I am trying to use nearly all my puppets in this play. Today I got a board with six light sockets on it and a master switch. To dim my lights I use a model railway power controller. I use car interior lights to light the wings and the backcloth. An ex-Army signal lamp fitted with a plastic filter tray. I use one home-made floodlight and a bedside lamp.

JEN TIPTON.—This Christmas I had the advantage of my new lighting system which comprises of five strip lights situated behind proscenium opening, the wings with one directly above the stage. They are operated by a control box which has the new slide controls. One simply moves the lever up and down to dim the lights.

We performed at children's parties. The whole show, together with record acts, was recorded on a stereophonic tape recorder. We did "Caterpillar Capers" and "The Witch's Spell" from Joan Field's first book of plays, which I think is the most suitable of all the play books, the others concentrating more on chat than action. I did a successful record turn, "Paper Roses" and "When I Fall in Love" from the prolific Osmond family—which won the hearts of the teeny bopper element in the audience. "Sleigh Ride" was also done as a record turn. I made a sleigh for this which seated two puppets and was pulled by a rather underpowered "J.C. range" horse. I used torn up tissue paper for snow. We finished the show with my musical version of "Cinderella" which included many unforgettable songs from Disney films.

TONY GOWTHER, South Australia.—I am 12 years old and am very interested in puppetry and I have 8 of your puppets and I am having 4 more sent from England soon. My Dad has helped me to build a Puppet stage which I have in my bedroom and I have also helped start a puppet club at school. There are no Puppet Clubs here and it is very difficult to learn about them so I have to go to the Library and get what books I can.

SISTER MARY PAUL MILLER, West Virginia, U.S.A.—Perhaps you'd be interested to know I did a little marionette show on a Christmas program our local TV studio produced and aired twice during the holidays. Also since last March I have performed over 60 shows—in schools; at an Arts & Crafts Festival in The Park; at a big celebration in the Market Place here; and in a tent at a Charity Faire in Philadelphia. This last affair amounted to 8 shows a day for four consecutive days. It was quite a drain on me physically. Also performed at some Church Festivals here in Wheeling as well as some shows here at Mount de Chantal. Despite the fact that this took such a toll on me physically, it was profitable in one way. I made almost $900.00!

So far I have over 50 marionettes and 4/5ths of them are Pelhams. They are the best. God bless you for all you have done to bring so much enjoyment to children of all ages.

The following would like to contact Pelpups living in their area:

JENNIFER LONDON, Birchwood, Emma Terrace, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, PH10 6JA.

GORDON SHAPLEY, 18 Maple Road, Yeading, Hayes. Middx.

MARY STEEDEN, 3 Thomas Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

EDWIN FARE, 354 W. Valley Stream Blvd., Valley Stream, NY. 11580, U.S.A.

The following is a List of Members who would like Pen Friends:

JOANNA HAYES, 32 Kings Drive, Fulwood, Preston, Lancs. PR2 3HP, a girl from France or Canada aged about 13-14 yrs. Hobbies: music, puppets, swimming and tennis.

ROSEMARY CUNNINGHAM, 40 Hawkwell Chase, Hawkwell, Essex, SS5 4NH. Hobbies are puppetry, piano, swimming, bird watching, cooking, roller skating. Would like girl between 9 and 11 years.

MARY KATHRYN CROMWELL, 6023 Greeley Blvd., Springfield, V.A. 22152, U.S.A., age 8, a girl from England.

HELEN BARNES, 33 Pirie Road, Buglawton, Congleton, Cheshire, from anywhere in the world speaking English aged 12-13. Hobbies: reading, ballet, swimming, sailing, tennis, a girl if possible.

T. J. WATSON, 'Halavd', 20 Chestnut Close, Hoole, Chester, CH2 3EJ, age 10, a girl from another country. Hobbies: music, puppetry, stamp collecting and nursing.

PATRICIA MANN, 209 Nottingham Road, Derby, 15 years, from America or Switzerland. Hobbies: stamp collecting, pop music.

MICHAEL MANN, 209 Nottingham Road, Derby, a girl or boy from any part of the world, aged 10-12. Hobbies: stamp collecting, puppetry, swimming and drama.

LYNDA KALEY, 12 Mill Road, Frettenham, Norwich, Norfolk, NOR 02Y, an English speaking girl from anywhere in the world. Hobbies: gymnastics, reading, stamp collecting and sports.

MARK COCANOUGHER, Box 484, Decatur, Texas 76234, U.S.A., aged 14. Hobbies: tennis, drawing, reading, track, swimming, architecture, would like one from Great Britain.

BRIDGET DODD, 25 Folly Grove, Gaywood, King's Lynn, Norfolk, a girl aged 11-12 living in Switzerland, interested in music, dancing, reading, art, puppetry, ice skating, writing and speaking English.

STEPHANIE LEE, 767 E 21st Street, Brooklyn, New York 11210, U.S.A., girl or boy age 8 or 9. Hobbies: puppetry, art and music and reading.

BETH LEE, 767 E 21st Street, Brooklyn, New York 11210, U.S.A., girl aged 9-11. Hobbies: puppetry, music, reading and ballet.

WAYNE SULLIVAN, 6230 Vale Drive, Batan Rouge, Louisiana, U.S.A. 70812, boy 9-10 speaking English and interested in puppetry, magic, art and acting.

T. DAILY, 42 Newhouse Crescent, Garston, Watford, Herts, 11 years old, likes music.

SALLY ROBINSON, 27 Summit Ave., Kingsbury, London, NW9 0TH, 11 years old. Hobbies: swimming, athletics, puppetry, reading, pop music and acting in plays, a girl from France who speaks some English.

GILLIAN HOLDING, 34 Grove Park, Kingsbury, London, NW9 0JX. Hobbies: reading, swimming, gymnastics, puppetry, play writing, playing chess, collecting stamps and posters, pop dancing, a boy who lives in U.S.A.

LINDA SHEPPARD, 84 Hamfield, Wantage, Berks, OX12 9EG, a boy 14 or over.

JOANNE LEVERSAGE, RR1, Campbell River, B.C., Canada, UGW 354, girl aged 12, 13, from England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales. Hobbies: stamps, puppets, animals.

CAROL BROOKES, Netherdene, 14 Ormesby Close, Dronfield Woodhouse, Sheffield, a boy or girl from anywhere in the world aged 11.

STEPHEN CALCUTT, Avenue Garden Cottages, The Gardens, Ellgford Tamworth, Staffs, a boy from Australia aged 9-10. Hobbies: puppetry, magic.

SHEENA MCMURTRIE, 1 Lauderdale Drive, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, U77 5AP, from America aged 9, owns a dog. Hobbies: dogs, tennis, riding, swimming, pop music, roller skating.

ANDREW WEALLANS, 10 Maple Terrace, Leazes, Burnopfield, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 6BJ, a boy or girl aged 10/12. Hobbies: filming and photography.

JANE RODGERS, 16 Hillsboro Road, Bognor Regis, Sussex, from anywhere aged 12-13. Hobbies: walking, puppeting, fond of animals.

MARY MCCORMICK, 3 Hillcrest Road, Stratford, N.J. 08084, U.S.A., a girl aged 12-13 interested in puppetry, reading, art, writing, horses, fantasy, from England, Ireland or Germany.

MICHAEL DOWNES, 36 The Avenue, Billericay, Essex, from abroad aged 9-11. Hobbies: puppetry, pop music, swimming and football.

CHRISTINA O'BRIEN, Ryndle Court. 47 Northstead Manor Drive, Scarborough, Yorks, YO12 6AF, boy or girl aged 12-14, interesed in stamps, puppets and reading.

ANDREW FRENCH, Copper Lawn, Delvin, Co. Westmeath. Hobbies: puppetry, magic, art, music, animals and swimming.

JAN ATTERHOLT, 782 Trade Square West, Troy, Ohio 45373, U.S.A., a girl from Spain or France. Hobbies: writing, chemistry, art, playing outside.

ELIZABETH WENDT, 621 Pine Tree Lane, Beaver Dam, Wsc. 53016, U.S.A., a girl 10-14. Hobbies: music, literature, swimming animals.

SUSAN BRAUN, 621 Oneida Street, Beaver Dam, Wsc. 53916, U.S.A., girl 9-12. Hobbies: volley ball, cooking, sewing.

ROY FLETCHER, 143 Featherby Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 6BS, a boy stamp collector. Hobbies: stamp collecting, swimming, collecting things and, of course, puppetry.

JEFF HAINES, 4204 N.E. 21st Avenue, Ft. Launderdale, Florida, U.S.A., a boy or girl from anywhere, speaking and writing English, aged 8-10. Hobbies: stamps, coins, magic, witchcraft and puppets.

NINA HUMPHRIES, 55 Rameau Drive, T.H. 213, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada, a girl or boy from anywhere, especially Britain. Hobbies: horses, puppetry, stamps, rocks and creative writing.

"MY PUPPET(S) AND I" EXAMPLES for NEW COMPETITION

ANDREW MACKICHAN

ANNA COX

The Ox and the Ass

A Nativity Play.

Characters: A Broom, Two Pails, An Ox, An Ass, A Girl.

Scene: The Stable at Bethlehem.

Two Pails (on one string) and the Broom at back of stage. Ox, front corner (R), *Ass ditto* (L). *Distant music. The Broom sweeps round the stage, pausing by the Ox and the Ass as it passes them. They take no notice.*

Broom: The stable is swept and all is clean,
Fit for welcoming a Queen.
Both pails are proud in their shining,
(*The Pails rattle their handles*).
Ready to wait upon a King.
But Ox and Ass are sound asleep,
So I may dance and I may sweep
And make the little dust boys leap.
Come on, Pails (*handles rattle*), let us skip.

(*Pails and Broom dance, ending in their original positions at back of stage*).

Ox: Brother Ass!

Ass (*waking up*): Did you speak?

Ox: Yes, I was thinking that the hay won't see us through the winter.

Ass: It that all you woke me up for?

Ox: I didn't know you were asleep, though I might have heard.

Ass: You haven't any ears.

Ox: Ears won't grow us our hay. They've cut down our ration for three nights running!

Ass: I hadn't noticed, you're very observant.

Ox: Observant? Yes, hunger quickens the wits. Besides, there's no cake, didn't you notice that? No cake and a day's ploughing!

Ass: I don't eat cake.

Ox: You should. It stops colds, catarrh, corns, asthma, rheumatism, rhomboids and wind.

Ass: I won't rob you, hay is good enough for me.

Ox: But I tell you, it isn't going to last.

Ass: What, not when they've enough to stuff hundreds of mattresses with it for people to sleep on?

Ox: What are you talking about?

Ass: They have filled thousands of mattresses with hay during the last few days.

Ox: Whatever for?

Ass: For-people-to-sleep-on, as I said before.

Ox: You ass, men don't sleep on good hay.

Ass: You'll believe me when they come shaking out the mattresses into our stalls.

Ox: Yes, I'll believe you then. But Reason is against you.

Ass: Reason is not against me. Reason tells us that when millions of men come into a village with only one inn there is bound to be a shortage of everything, including beds.

Ox: And cake. What do they come here for?

Ass: Because the Government wants to raise an army or a tax, I suppose.

Ox: Men are silly fools to be taxed.

Ass: Men are silly fools, though they are not silly to sleep on hay, you do often enough and mess it up so that you can't eat it.

Ox: That's because they will chain my head to the wall.

Ass: If you will grow those horns you must expect it; now my ears hurt no one.

Ox: Except yourself—you never hear any good of yourself. It is always cursing and swearing you hear.

Ass: True enough. (*Pails rattle*). The pails are very restless tonight.

Ox: No wonder, they are empty.

Ass: Shall we send them away?

Ox: Certainly, empty pails are no use.

Ass: Now you pails, clear off. You heard what Ox said, you may come back when full.

(*The* Ass *chases the pails round and off the stage*).

Ass: Impudence! I'm tempted to kick the bucket. (*Pause*). Listen, the old man's coming in with some people. More trouble.

Ox: Perhaps he has remembered the cake. (*Pauses, sound of stable door opening. Silence*). What's happening.

Ass: Can't you hear what he says.

Ox: No, not a word.

Ass: He's in the next stall telling some people he is very sorry but there is really not a room left and they should have booked one beforehand, he's quite fussy. She says—

Ox: Who says?

Ass: She, there's a woman, she says never mind this will do nicely if we can be by ourselves, and he says no one will come in and in the next stall is a stupid ox—

Ox: He didn't say stupid.

Ass: How do you know? He said an old ox and an ass.

Ox: I bet he said silly ass.

Ass: He didn't then, an ass and no more, and she says the breath of an ox is sweet and an ass is the dearest obstinate—

Ox: She said that?

Ass: Obstinate *darling*, she said—

Ox: Never. It shows she doesn't know you.

Ass: Who never hears good of himself? Well, he says, the other man, what about the price and the old man says he wouldn't have the face to charge them anything just to sleep on hay.

Ox: Our hay too.

Ass: Selfish.

Ox: Who said selfish?

Ass: I did.

Ox: Not she?

Ass: Not she.

Ox: She's too sensible. Are they stopping the night?

Ass: I think so. The old man's going. He's saying goodnight. He says we never make any noise. He's gone.

Ox: Well, that's that. No cake tonight. (*Pause. Ass goes to back of stage to listen*).

Ass: He's come back again. He says they are to go over to the inn for supper, and they say they will have it here and may we have some too, and he says we are fed—

Ox: Liar!

Ass: And she says may we have a little extra because it is a birthnight and all should be happy, even an ox.

Ox: Go on. I told you she was sensible.

Ass: And he says he will send you some cake and me some oats . . . because it is a birthnight!

Ox: Whose?

Ass: How should I know? He's gone now.

Ox: And he'll forget my cake.

Ass: She won't.

Ox: Women are as bad as men at forgetting.

How many times a week does the girl forget our water?

Ass: This one doesn't speak like our girl.

Ox: They are both women and they love brooms and dusters and 'doing-out' much more than essential things, food and drink. The girl forgets our water, but she never forgets to turn us out into the yard while she does out the stable.

(*Broom begins to move about*).

Broom: Excuse me, I should like to say that I entirely agree with the ox though I think it is stretching the point to say that women *love* us. They overwork us too much.

Ox: How do you explain that?

Broom: They hate spiders and dust whereas they know we are not afraid of such things and can reach after them into corners and on the ceiling, so if a woman sees me resting by the pump or idling in the back kitchen she seizes me at once and begins on the spiders, even if they're not there.

Ass: They do not like a mess.

Ox: They do not like leaving things alone.

Broom: But they like dancing, and they can dance with me about the room. (*Dances*).

Ox: I wish you need not dance so much in this stable. As a calf I spent a whole winter in one shed without being 'done out' once.

Ass: True, but it is nice to have the straw shaken out and to be dry and warm.

Ox: Why do you want to stand up for them? Of course it's nice. But the point is, is it nice to be chivvied out into a cold yard where there is not a bite to pick up and nothing to do but shiver until you're let in again. If you had a logical mind you would see that, and one solid discomfort discounts many merely temporary satisfactions.

Ass: Old grouser!

Ox: Nothing of the kind. I am warning you what to expect. Women forget. But whether they forget or not, there is a shortage of food, and we shall be chewing our tethers by March.

Ass: Bother your starving. (*Noise of door opening*).

Broom: Excuse me, but the girl's coming back and I'm wanted in the next room. I shall not trouble you tonight. (*Bows and exits*).

Ass: There, the girl's coming back, you'll see who is right this time.

Ox: What do you mean? I never said she'd forget, I said she might not have enough with all those men to feed.

Ass: Ssh . . . she's talking to them. (*Pause*).

Ox: I can't hear anything, what does she say?

Ass: I don't believe it!

Ox: Don't believe what?

Ass: The one that is going to be a mother.

Ox: Steady on, let's have a little sense, has she brought the cake?

Ass: Hang your beastly cake, you think of nothing but your belly.

Ox: Well, Mr. High and Mighty, of what do you think?

Ass: Be quiet, I'm not thinking, I'm listening! Something enormous is going to happen.

Ox: A double ration of cake?

Ass: SHUT UP! She's got your rotten cake, the mothering one asked her if she had it.

Ox: Then why not get on with it?

(*The stable becomes lighter*).

What's that light? Is she coming in with the cake?

Ass: I'll kick you if you don't hold your tongue, I think the light has to do with the birth.

Ox: The light? It is not a lantern, it's a star!

Ass: A star! Where?

Ox: Over the stable, quite close. It is not an ordinary star. It's a lost star.

Ass: How do you mean?

Ox: It must be lost if it's not with the others.

Ass: I think it has been put there on purpose.

Ox: It can't be, the old man couldn't reach so high, besides it is a star I tell you.

Ass: Yes, I understand. I say—listen—I say: God has put it there on purpose.

Ox: On what purpose?

Ass: To be a sign.

Ox: A sign? The Inn has a sign already.

Ass: This is not a village sign but a world sign. You forget what I heard them say.

Ox: I don't forget because you never told me.

Ass: Because you would bother about your cake.

Ox: You are sharp for an Ass, that is the trouble. An ordinay ass would have seen first to the food. (*Enter the girl with the buckets, followed by the broom*).

The Girl: Now then, here's a birthday present for you, which you don't deserve either of you. If I had my way you should both be turned into the yard, and for that matter all the crew in the Inn. (*She puts down the buckets, and takes up the broom*).

Ass: There you see she brought you the cake.

Ox: But she hasn't given it to us, and didn't I tell you she couldn't keep her hands off a broom. We shall be in the yard yet.

The Girl (*sweeping*): Here's the sweetest lady in the world, like a Queen, she must be a Queen, a Queen fit to reign over the world, and she's got to have her baby in a stable next door to a silly old ox and a stupid ass.

Ox and Ass: Silly? Stupid? A baby?

The Girl (*sweeping*): Anyway it will be a boy and she will let me hold it in my arms. I would like to be as good and as beautiful and so full of the grace of God as she is, and I would like to be a mother and nurse my own baby. Her husband is a carpenter. He's old enough to be her father, perhaps he is. I hope my husband will be young. This is a gentle, knightly kind of man even if his hair is grey—though why he should be happy considering he's poor and hadn't the sense to book a room—perhaps he tried to and couldn't.

Ox: There's a lot of talk before we get to the cake.

Ass: Be patient, you'll get more than cake to astonish you.

Ox: I don't want to be astonished, I want to be fed.

The Girl (*she finishes her sweeping and puts a bucket down to each animal*): There, that's your birthday cake and if you are not both quite quiet I shall turn you out into the yard.

(*The Choir (off) sings the 'Gloria in excelsis' beginning very softly.* The Girl *goes towards the curtain but kneels without drawing it aside. At the end the curtain is drawn up revealing Our Lady with the Infant in her arms, S. Joseph kneeling in adoration*).

Ass: There, brother Ox, while we were talking see what was happening!

Ox: Ass, I see. . . . Would the Little One, think you, care for my cake?

(*A Carol is sung.* Ox *and* Ass *go up and kneel beside the* Girl).

Curtain.

The search for the Golden Lute

By Camilla Shelley

Characters: Wizard of the Clouds, Clown (Jester), Frog, Butterfly, Narrator.

Scenes: 1, The Palace Garden. 2, Clouds (The Sky).

Narrator: Long ago there was a court jester who played his lute all day. He was so good that the King decided to have a banquet every night so that the court jester could show his talent to the guests. Everybody was happy and enjoyed the court jester's tunes—but alas! for one night the lute was stolen, and everybody in the kingdom was sad—especially the jester. There were no more banquets—and in the palace there was a terrible silence.

The scene opens in the palace gardens where the court jester is sitting down near a pond, by twilight.

Jester: Ah me, 'tis a great loss,
I cannot play through night and day,
My lute is gone,
The skies are grey.

(*Frog jumps out of the pond and sits on the edge*).

Frog: Croak, croak,
What ails you so
My little friend?
Your sorrows I would gladly mend.

Jester: Through fields and forests I've wandered,
In violent seas I've swum
To find my lute, there is no chance,
No chance for party fun.

(*Jester starts to walk away*).

Frog: But wait—don't go,
I think I know
Who's got your lute—
Without dispute.
Last week before the night was out
I heard a noise—I wanted to shout,
For there in the sky
Was a giant butterfly,
And crouched in its wings
Was a sorcerer,
The Wizard of the Clouds.
And in his hands,
The colour of sands,
Was your lute.

Clown: But we must seek my treasured lute,
Though we cannot travel to the sky by foot,
A magic carpet, or perhaps a balloon,
But whatever we do, it must be soon.

Frog: I cannot think—
Ah yes, I know,
I have a friend,
To her I'll go. (*Jumps into pond*).

(*The clock strikes ten and frog arrives*).

Frog: From down in the depths
Where all the mud lies,
I have brought a large magic leaf
On which we can fly.
But first we must wait till the light of the moon
Shines on the leaf—and then, very soon,
We'll be able to fly
Through the midnight blue sky,
And when it is day
We must find our way through the clouds.

(*Moon shines on the leaf, Jester and Frog jump on and the leaf rises slowly*).

Interval.

(*2nd scene opens 'in the sky' (clouds made of cotton wool). To the right of the stage there is throne on which is seated the Wizard of the Clouds*).

Wizard: So, you have dared to come?
But you must go,
Because I know
Why you are here.
There is no merriment and cheer,
The lute is mine!

(*The Wizard on his throne rises up in the air —Wizard laughing wickedly*).

Clown: Dear Frog—I fear my lute is lost;
So in despair
We must prepare
Ourselves to find it.

Frog: You are but right,
But how can we fight
The Sorcerer of the Clouds?

(*The giant Butterfly lands softly by their side*).

Butterfly: There I can help you,
I shall be your friend,
The Sorcerer of the Clouds
Must come to an end.
I have been his servant for one hundred years—
And when I ask for freedom he only jeers.
But at midnight tonight
He will lose all his powers,
But by morning tomorrow
He'll be wicked and sour.

Frog: So at midnight tonight
We can only try
But to conquer him
Because he must die!

Clown: The sky is darkening,
The clouds are getting black,
A storm is coming,
We will have to go back!

Butterfly (*in a low voice*): 'Tis the Wizard's revenge—
He causes this storm.

Wizard (*bellows—off stage*): When I've finished with you
You'll wish you hadn't been born!

(*This is followed by a roll of thunder and a flash of lightning and for a little while the storm continues. Perhaps it would be more dramatic if there was some frightening music as well.*

Suddenly everything stops—there is absolute silence for a few seconds.

The three trudge wearily on stage—backs bent —and miserable, but very surprised).

Butterfly: 'Tis midnight already—
The Wizard's lost his power,
We must hurry to kill him—
We have only one hour.

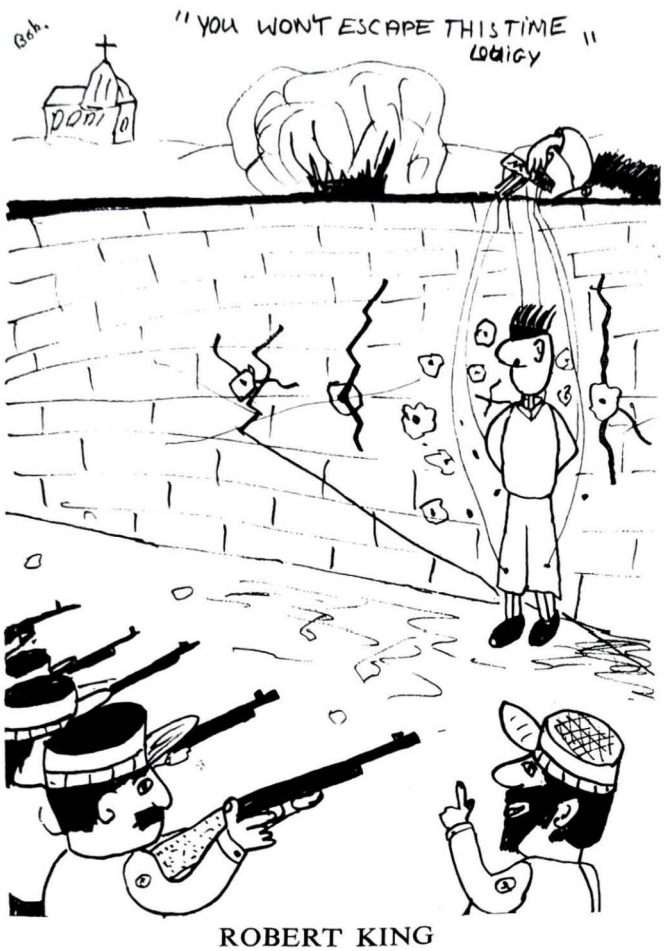
Frog: It's a pity that the leaf
Was washéd away,
Or I'd be back in England
Watching tadpoles at play.

Butterfly: If you'd like your lute back
We had better make haste
Otherwise in one hour from this cloud
We'll be chased.

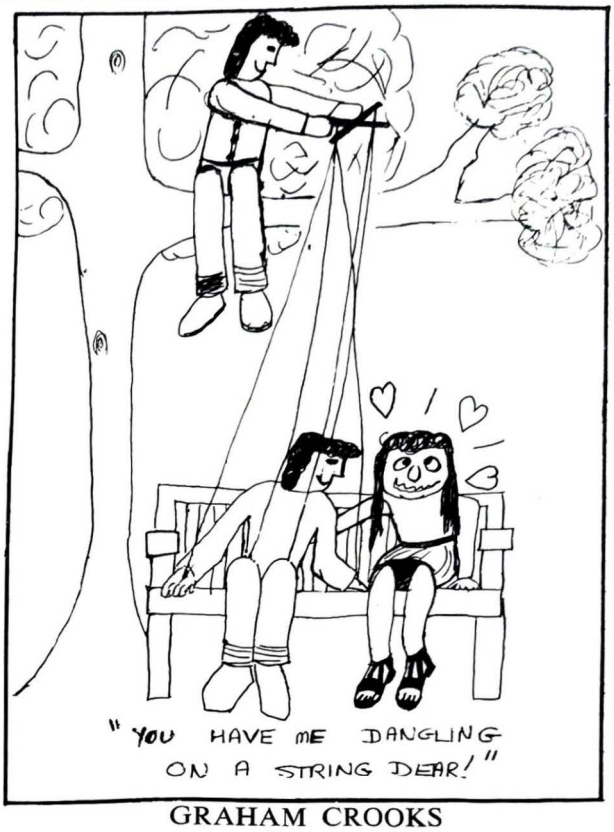
(*In the disance the throne can be seen—painted on the back cloth—and the three start walking towards it. Curtain goes down, and comes up immediately. The three are standing near the throne*).

Clown: There is the throne,
But the Wizard's not around,
And we have only ten minutes
For the lute to be found.

FROG (*who has been walking round and round the throne*):
Here it is, hidden under the cushion,
And here beside it—is some sort of potion.
CLOWN: My lute!
At last!
My sorrows have passed
And now I can play
Through night and through day!
Hurray!
BUTTERFLY: That potion's no potion,
That potion's a lotion!
I've seen the Wizard
Mix a drop with white flour
He dabs on his chin—to regain his power!
FROG: Ah ha! then let's go!
Because we all know
That the Wizard is harmless,
The Wizard is charmless!
BUTTERFLY: So jump on my back
And to England we'll fly,
Leaving that Wizard
To moan and to sigh.
(*Butterfly rises in the air and flies away*).



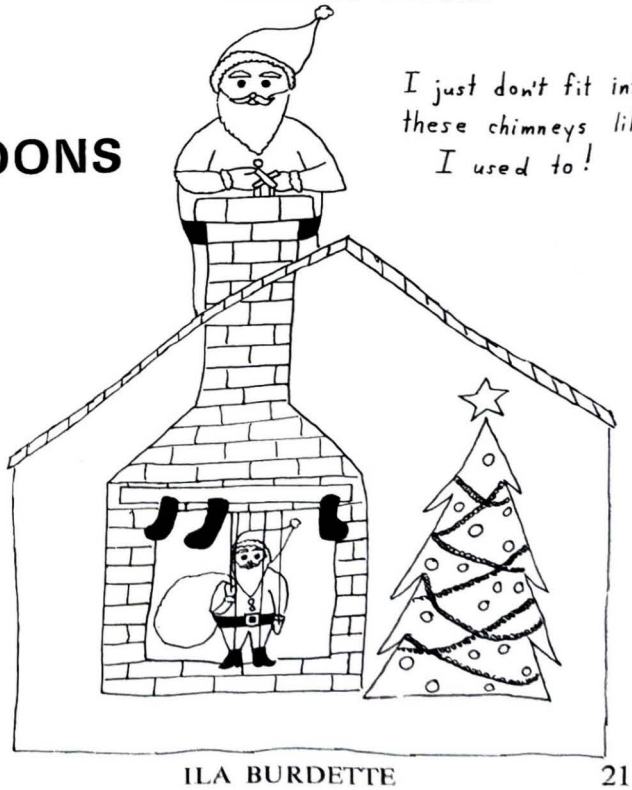
ROBERT KING



GRAHAM CROOKS

CARTOONS

HELEN TOMLINSON



ILA BURDETTE

A Return to Puppetry

by Keith Anderson

Puppets have always seemed to find a way into my life regardless of where I was or what I was involved in, and so it is not surprising that after nearly 15 years of other activities, I find the puppet strings in my hands again. Who am I? What do I do? —It's hard to say, let's just say I'm an entertainer.

Like hundreds of other Boys and Girls I was once given a puppet (Pelham, of course!) for a birthday present. In no time at all I had gathered my friends around me and formed a puppet club, giving shows at Fetes, Schools and Homes etc. During our school holidays we would take our puppets on long tours. This was particularly exciting as where we lived in South Africa the towns are far apart and travel is exciting. Some times we would be lucky to enjoy a visiting puppet companies show. Once the Hogarths came out and twice John Wright. We owned over a hundred puppets and the stage was huge.

One day nearly 24 years ago a circus came to our home town. It was called Wilkies and Boswells Circus and I was 12 years old! We had a wonderful idea—we'd stage our own Puppet Circus!—Hours and days were spent repainting, redressing and rehearsing the new show. At last it was ready, and proudly we approached the circus owner and announced the fact that we too owned a circus! Would he like to come and see it? He must have been a very busy man with lots of important things to do, but he found time to come and see our puppet circus—and what's more, the next day he came back a second time—only this time he brought his entire lot of artistes to see us, too! I don't suppose that the show was much good, maybe he was impressed with our enterprise, but that night we were guests of honour at the circus. After the show we presented the clown (Tickey) with one of our puppets as a present (when I saw Tickey last, more than 20 years later he reminded me of this, and showed me the puppet that he'd kept all that time!) But the most exciting thing was that Mr. Boswell invited me to spend all my school holidays with the circus. Except for odd occasions, I've never left the circus since then!

For a while puppets faded into the background while I learnt tightrope and trapeze and visited exciting new countries and places—then I fell. Suddenly I could no longer fly through the air and I had no way of earning a living. Desperate, I got a job as a theatre stage hand. After the shows at night I'd sleep in the dressing rooms to save money, and with every penny I could get, and scraps of old stage scenery, I began to build puppets. A new set of bigger 2 ft. puppets. After I'd built about 500, I rented an old building in a seaside town in South Africa: installed a flying grid, raised seating for 100 people and air-conditioning. In the basement under the theatre we installed our workshops and at the back of our garden, looking onto the sea, we lived. We were in business again! We had 5 different programmes, each lasting 2 hours. We kept our little theatre for nearly 3 years and were very happy there. In our workshops we started making puppets and props for other artistes, and then theatre decor. Then the decor started taking over—more and more orders came for decor until slowly the puppets got more and more left out of things, and were finally stored away. We closed our little theatre and moved to Cape Town. Then one cold, wet winter I read in the newspaper about a poor coloured family whose home had been washed away in the floods. They had lost all they had,

including their only means of earning a living—the man was a puppeteer! I sent him all my puppets, stage, lighting, decor and sound equipment. I figured the puppets would be happier dancing to his hands than shut up in my stuffy old boxes. I went back to the circus.

All that seems so long ago now. So much seems to have happened. I went from strength to strength on the trapeze, and in time I started a Circus School. Today I own more than a dozen acts, and more than 50 people work for me. The theatrical world didn't let me get away either, and although I no longer paint or build decor myself any more, I am constantly designing operas and ballet from my circus caravan. My trapeze acts are everywhere. For the last 6 years we've appeared every Chrismas on BBC T.V., and this year in England I have acts with the circus in Great Yarmouth and Chipperfields (if you want to see them).

Although I work all over the world, my home is in a circus caravan in South Africa with Boswell and Wilkie. Every year we change all our programmes and have to think of new acts, as well as doing my own trapeze act I also devise and produce a new act every year for the owner's wife—Madame Wilkie. Well one year she worked a dog act; then a dove act and later the horses. I got bored with this, so I designed a magic act where she turned into a real live tiger (this act is also with Chipperfields this year) and then the next year I burnt her alive in a coffin—after that I thought she'd had enough of a rough time, and I tried to think of something original. Then I remembered the 'Little People'!

As quickly as I could I made drawings of the puppets that I wanted and sent them to Bob Pelham to make for me. Disaster struck! Bob was in his Christmas rush period and couldn't make them for me. Panic letters and telegrams went back and forth between Africa and Marlborough. Yes, Bob had some big puppets in stock. No, Bob didn't have the characters that I wanted. Suddenly Bob found 7 Snow White Dwarfs that he'd used in a store window display. Then I fell again and was back in hospital. The girl I was going to teach the act to had never worked a puppet before, and I couldn't teach her because the puppets were still in England. Quickly I designed her 8 costume changes during the act in the hope of distracting the audience's gaze from badly manipulated puppets! Bob couldn't give me the trick puppets I wanted, and I couldn't make them from a hospital bed. I talked a doctor friend into lending me a real small child's skeleton and I strung it and had a disjointing skeleton (since I got out of hospital I've been able to substitute a plastic one and return the original). Bob got some puppets to me early and these I repainted, restrung and redressed to my requirements, but the final 4 puppets arrived 12 hours before we opened our season! Frantically we stripped them and re-adapted them and then suddenly, without rehearsal, it was "Show Time". Bob's puppets were wonderful. They worked like a dream and looked excellent.

I decided that to start the season I would work the puppets and Madame Wilkie would move her hands in and out of the strings and 'Look', as if she was working them. I was nervous. I hadn't worked a puppet for more than ten years, and here I was, still weak from hospital, about to work before a paying public! I needn't have worried: like riding a bike or swimming—you can't forget the knack.

We entered the ring. Myself carrying the 'Grand Turk' and Madame Wilkie in a full-length glittering black gown. A few bars of music and then suddenly the 'Turk' had turned into 6 gaily painted laughing clowns. Before the audience realise what's happened, the clowns are whisked away and I take Madame's coat from her and there, hidden in the folds of the cape is the Skeleton. We work with no stage—just in spot lights. Madame's long tight fitting dress makes an excellent background for the skeleton in his green spot lights. Then I'm back with an exotic Indian belly dancer who brings down the house (or tent?). Madame reappears in a mini dress and walking a fluffy white poodle around the ring fence, stopping to sniff and say "Hi" to the people in the ringside seats.

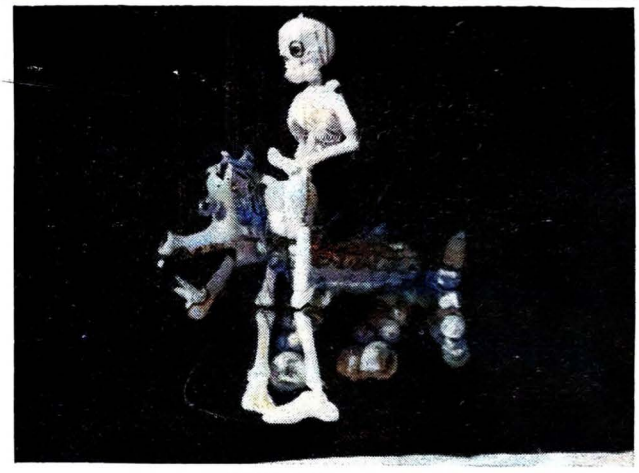
Now it's time for the little children in the audience. The Walt Disney puppets! Mickey and Minny; Donald and Goofey, and then the 7 dwarfs. Seven! "Did I say seven?" The Ringmaster asks, and Madame Wilkie and the Ringmaster begin to count them 1... 2... 3... 4... (Oh they are so heavy, all on one control!) 5... 6...! Only 6! Something wrong. Suddenly, through the ringdoors in dashes the circus small clown dressed as Dopey and joins on behind the puppets!

More costumes disappear of Madame, and a little coon appears. Let me explain that 'There is nothing like a cape coon. Each new year the poor coloured folk in

Cape Town dress up in bright satins and ribbons and dance around the streets singing. Maybe they look a bit like British 'Minstrels' but the rhythms and dancing is more like a sort of cross between New Orleans and Rio. Only a South African would really understand and appreciate it, but it goes over well. While we are showing local colour, we include our Zulu dancer also. Lastly a young, hip-swinging boy puppet grabs a microphone and sings "I'm a Long Haired Lover from Liverpool", and we end. Well not quite. We let them (the audience) shout for more for a while and then we bring in "Little Gifi". Let me explain: I've become a little too old and stiff in the joints to actually do trapeze myself any more, but I still love appearing, so I work as a clown sometimes and my name is Gifi—So "Little Gifi" is a clown puppet looking exactly like I will appear later in the show. "Little Gifi" comes dancing in and goes to shake hands with a child in the audience. The music is gay and loud. He sees Madame Wilkie seated on a stool in the ring and goes to her. She gives him a balloon which he blows up..... and up .....and up .....and .....BANG! It bursts. The music cuts out and there is complete silence in the vast circus tent. For a while "Gifi" is puzzled. What has happened? Slowly he turns to look behind him —and then the other side—nothing! So he bends down and looks between his feet—nothing. Sadly, he drops his head and then with his face buried in the folds of her dress, and tightly clinging to Madame's leg, he softly and slowly begins to sob. Very gently, and in complete silence she lifts him up, and comforting him on her shoulder she walks out of the ring. We don't come back even for a bow at the end. In all my years in circus, it is the first time I've ever known people in a circus audience to cry!

So that's how the puppets and I met again. Madame Wilkie no longer just "Pretends" to work them—she has learnt to be a good manipulator, and I have dropped out of the act and resumed my other activities but there will always be a special place for the puppets.

DAVID HUGHES



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